

THE BLUE AND GRAY.

The blue is fading into gray,
Just as when sunset comes
With bugle calls that die away
And softly throbbing drums;
The shadows reach across the
sky
And hush the cares of day;
The bugle call and drum beat
die—
The blue fades into gray.

The gray is blending into blue—
A sunrise glad and fair,
When, in the richness of the
dew,
The roses riot there,
The bitterness of yesterday
Is lost to me and you:
The blue is fading into gray—
The gray blends into blue.

They're sleeping now the long,
long sleep—
The boys who wore the blue;
Above the gray the grasses
creep—
And both were good and true;
And in the twilight of our life—
The ending of the way—
There comes forgetfulness of
strife—
The blue fades into gray.

Above each mound the lily
glows,
And humble daisies nod;
The ruby glory of the rose
Sheds luster on the sod;
The tears—the tears—they are
the dew
That greets the coming day.
The gray is blending into blue—
The blue fades into gray.

—W. D. NESBIT.

Louisa May's Solo At The Celebration.

By J. L. Harbour.

Louisa May is to sing a solo at the celebration," Mrs. Hatfield was explaining to a visitor. "And I don't know but she'll be too fine to speak to her own folks when she's rigged out in all her new things. Still I don't begrudge her the things. She's worked real faithful pickin' strawberries and doing all sorts of chores to pay for what she's to have. She's a good girl, Louisa is."

"But has she ever sung in public before?"

"She's never sung a solo all by herself except at one or two little Sunday school concerts. I don't know how it will be when she finds herself on the platform facing the big Fourth of July crowd."

"Oh, she'll get through it all right. I have heard that she sings beautifully."

"Well, I don't know but she does sing about as well as you could expect a girl of only 15 to sing. It's kind of curious; I can't sing no more than a blue jay, and when her pa tries it the hens scatter in terror. She gets it from her Grandfather Hatfield over in Ware. He'll be 75 come the 10th of next month, and he'll sit down to a little organ he's got and sing away by the hour. He's coming clear over from Ware to hear Louisa May sing. He's got to leave her his organ in his will."

"A piano would be better for her."

"Yes, Louisa May's wild to have a piano, but we can never get her one with five younger children to rear and school. Her Grandpa Hatfield mebbe could get one; but I don't know that he's able to, although he always has been close mouthed

about his money affairs. You'll be at the celebration?"

"Oh, yes; we are all going. And I expect to hear Louisa May beat 'em all."

There the conversation ended because a red-haired girl came hurriedly into the sitting room. She blushed furiously as she heard her name

On the morning of the Fourth of July Louisa May was very happy as she stood before the small mirror in her bedroom and gave the last touches to her toilet. Her challis had made up very prettily, and her mother had delighted her by an unexpected gift of a pretty pink ribbon sash. She had never before had such a beautiful hat, and there was but one thing to detract from her satisfaction with her appearance.

"If only I didn't have such a mop of red hair!" she said to the mirror. "If it was mouse colored, like Amanda Dane's, or a regular brindle, like Lucy Trent's I shouldn't care. But red! It isn't as red as it used to be, though, and I shall wear my hat while I sing—that will hide it a good deal."

There had been few holidays in Louisa May's life, and never one so full of promise of pleasure as this. She had been to the village the day before to rehearse her song with Miss Hope who was to play to the accompaniment on the organ, and Miss Hope had said that Louisa sang beautifully. She had a very clear and strong voice, and she said to her mother as they drove toward the grove: "I don't feel a bit nervous or afraid now."

She did, however, feel a little nervous when her turn to sing came, and she found herself on the platform before the audience that filled every part of the grove. The chairman of the day stepped forward and said:

"We will now listen to a solo, 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' by Miss Louisa May Hatfield."

At this some of the grand army men set up a shout, and Louisa May walked to the front of the platform with the large silk flag she was to hold while she sang.

The applause died away, and the organist had just begun to play the prelude, when a boy shouted shrilly:

"Red head! Red head! Better look out or the fireworks will catch!"

Louisa May's pink cheeks grew pallid. She opened her lips, but no sound came from them. She was trembling from head to foot. The flag fell from her hand down over the edge of the platform. Then in an agony of embarrassment she put both hands over her face and began to cry.

The boy who had called out, "Red head" suddenly felt a hand grip the back of his collar and he was jerked from his seat by an irate little old man.

"I'll let you know how ye call my granddaughter 'red head,' ye little sass-box! You take that!" and he smartly boxed the howling boy's ears. Then he hurried toward the platform and up the steps. A queer-looking little old man was he, with long white hair and beard. He had on a stiffly starched linen "duster" and bright blue jean trousers. Hurrying to Louisa May's side, he put his arm around her waist and said, soothingly:

"There, there, Louisa May! Don't you mind that impudent little sass-box! You sing your

song now. Come, grandpa will help ye off on it!"

The old man picked up the flag which she had let fall to the platform and holding its staff in one hand while his other arm was round Louisa May's waist, he began to sing in a thin wavering, but not unmusical voice:

"Oh say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we halled at the twilight's last gleaming—
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming!"

He stopped at the end of these lines and said gently to Louisa May:

"Come, now, honey, you sing, too."

She had taken her hands from her face, and as she looked into the sympathetic faces of the people before her, she felt her courage rise. When the old man began to sing the next lines Louisa May's voice, clear and steady and sweet, rose high above his own:

"And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there,
Oh! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

Something of the lofty spirit of the grand old song suddenly filled Louisa May's heart and made her forget her wounded feelings. Her grandfather held the flag so that its folds were falling about her, and her eyes were shining and her face was smiling as she began the second stanza in a voice without the least quaver. The old man did not sing now. He stood beside her with one arm still around her, and nodded time with his snowy head and gently waved the flag above the singer.

When Louisa May's voice died away after the last lines, the applause was deafening. While it was still at its height, her grandfather stepped to the edge of the platform, holding the flag aloft. When he could be heard he called out shrilly: "Everybody join me in singing the last two lines! Come, now, everybody sing!"

"And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

The woods and the hills rang with the melody; they rang again with the shouts of the people when the lines had been sung not only once, but three times.

The governor himself congratulated Louisa May, and handing her the beautiful little silk flag he had been holding in his hand he said:

Let me give you this to remember me by."

Louisa May thought that she could never be any happier than she was during the rest of day, but she felt much the same way three days later when, on coming home from the strawberry patch, she found Grandpa Hatfield waiting for her in the hall. He flung open the parlor door behind him as he kissed her, and Louisa saw in a corner of the room a beautiful shining new piano.

"Why, grandpa!" she exclaimed, and flung her arms around his neck, half-laughing and half crying. His dim eyes had a strange light in them, and his voice was not very steady as he said:

"I tell ye, Louisa, I don't know when I have heard any-

thing that took such a hold of me as the way you sung that grand old 'Star-Spangled Banner.' I want it to be the first song you sing on your new piano. I'll play it and we'll sing it together."

A few moments later a passer-by reined up his horse in front of the house to listen to the fresh young voice and the old and quavering one singing together:

"And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

—Youth's Companion.

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